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What is an invocation prayer?

Question: "What is an invocation prayer?"

Answer: An invocation prayer is a request for the spiritual presence and blessing of God in a ceremony or event. To invoke is to call upon earnestly, so an “invocation” in the context of prayer is a serious, intentional calling upon God. It is common for prayers of invocation to be offered publicly at the beginning of a church service or other Christian gathering. Such prayers call upon God to grant His presence in the worship, to bless the service or activity, and to hear the prayers of petition offered to Him.

[The Psalms](#) are full of prayers of invocation. Many times, David prayed for God to be present with him and to hear his prayers, particularly in times of trouble and persecution. When David was in danger of being betrayed to King Saul by his enemies, he invoked God’s attention to his prayers: “Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth” ([Psalm 54:2](#)). Also, in times of deep affliction, David invoked God’s presence: “Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea” ([Psalm 55:1](#)). “Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer” ([Psalm 61:1](#)).

David’s prayers of invocation also begged God to help him in times of trouble. In a prayer that includes elements of

[imprecation](#), David invoked God's presence and help against his enemies in [Psalm 71:12-13](#): "Do not be far from me, my God; come quickly, God, to help me. May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace." [Psalm 79:9](#) invokes God's help for the glory of His name: "Help us, God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake." David also offered an invocation for God's blessing in a song of praise in [Psalm 67:1](#): "May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us."

In what is known as [the Lord's Prayer \(Matthew 6:9-15\)](#), Jesus begins with an invocation that 1) identifies God and our relationship to Him: "Our Father in heaven"; 2) ascribes glory and honor to God: "Hallowed be Your name"; and 3) lines up the petitioner with God's will: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." As Christians, we have access to the throne of God through faith in Christ ([Ephesians 3:12](#)). All our prayers of invocation should contain the elements of humility, praise, and reverence as we approach, [in Jesus' name](#), the One whose blessing we seek.

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution by R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

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